THE RURAL LIFE OF ENGLAND

BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID.

VIII.

BARK-STRIPPERS, HURDLE-MAKERS AND CHARCOAL-BURNERS.

If I mistake not, most Americans are under the impression that in England there is nothing, or not much, in the way of woods. This is an erroneous idea, however, as in many districts there are large tracts of woodland, and in nearly all more or less of them. I do not speak of the half score great "forests" of Government belonging; but of woods owned by private individuals, the territorial magnates of the land; usually the surroundings of their grand country mansions. In mountainous and hilly districts they are often of considerable extent, covering square miles, and mostly occupying declivities too steep to be conveniently arable. But there are also many tracts of woodland on level ground, where the soil is too poor to be worth tilling; and sometimes where worth it, such are maintained by plutocrats regardless of the cost, partly for the "grandeur" of the thing, but as much to make covers for game. True, only inside the park or in the immediate vicinity of the mansion are the trees permitted to attain any great age or size; the outside timber being converted into money as soon as it becomes available for certain economic purposes, and therefore salable. This occurs periodically, at intervals of from twenty to twenty-five years; as it has been found that such young trees pay better than older ones, the uses to which they are put being to make wheel-spokes, laths, hurdles, field gates for farms, and the like. The bark, too, is a valuable commodity disposable at the tanyards, as is also the charcoal obtained from the "lop and top" a requisite in many iron-works. Hence the industries of Bark-Stripping, Hurdle-Making and Charcoal-Burning.

In a woodland tract of large extent this work of utilization is almost continuously going on; for although the trees are not available till after twenty years' growth, the fallage is not all done at the same time, but extends over many years, in each of which a section of the wood is doomed. It is not altogether disforested, however; the young saplings being left to stand and grow up to trees in their turn, so that while one portion of the timber is being cut down others are getting ready for the axe in various stages of advancement.

It is The Bark-Stripper who leads off; his work commencing about the middle of April, when the sap begins to flow; for without this his task would be difficult or scarcely practicable. He has three spells at it, as in England there are three separate "runnings" of the sap in trees. The first, or "spring sap" as called, continues for a period of four or five weeks, when it ceases to flow. After a brief interval it commences running again, but only for a short while, till stagnancy once more ensues. This is also of short continuance, and is succeeded by the last, or "midsummer sap," in late June and the earlier days of July; after which the business of bark-stripping is at an end for the year. A dangerous business it is while it lasts; though likely the reader of this will wonder at my saying so. For, I take it, your strippers in the States do their work with the trees felled and lying along the ground. Sometimes it is so in England, where the timber is large and intended for house-building, props in mines, railway sleepers and such like. But the smaller sort, meant for the other purposes I have spoken of, calls for a different manipulation; and would be spoiled, or at least rendered less fit for its uses, were the trees cut down before being barked. The stripping, therefore, is done on the tree as it stands, the cutting down to come afterward; hence the danger.

The mode of procedure is as follows: The stripper first makes him a rough ladder, by which he may ascend the tree's trunk as far as it will reach. If above that there still be a portion of the bole without branches to give him foothold, he drives in a series of iron pins, made expressly for this purpose, and by these continues his climb from one to the other. On getting to the highest ascendable point of the trunk, he wriggles himself out upon the branches as far as these will bear him; then peels off their bark, and lets it fall to the earth. The tool employed is the "stripper"—a little iron blade, steel-tipped, and in shape resembling the ace of spades, with a wooden handle in socket; the whole implement being about the size and weight of a mortising chisel. But for stripping the trunk, where the bark is thicker and more adherent, he uses a "stripper" of somewhat bigger blade and longer shaft, though otherwise the same. Dealing with the larger limbs, he "chips" them—that is, notches them circumferentially—at distances of about three feet apart; then making a longitudinal incision, he enters the stripper and "heaves" the bark off in sections. His work is begun on the topmost branches of the tree and carried downward; for if done the other way, the already peeled and slippery limbs would make it both more difficult and more dangerous. When all the boughs have been decorticated the trunk is attacked, it too being "chipped" into sections and stripped from above downward. If of large circumference the iron steps are driven in at distances all around it, for then the thick, heavy bark calls for extra strength and firm support in the "heaving off," the stripper using his arms, head and shoulders to detach it.

The danger lies chiefly in barking the upper branches; and it is a real danger, oft ending in death. No year passes without record of more than one stripper—in some years many of them—receiving sore injury or being killed outright by falling from the trees. Passing a wood where they have been at work, and seeing the branches bare almost to their topmost twigs, one can well believe this; wondering, too, at their having ventured out so far. True, they are not necessitated to take such risk, it being understood that where the branch is deemed untrustworthy they may hack it off and do the barking on the ground. But these fellows are very fearless, and too often very reckless.

The reader will be wanting to know what is the reward for this perilous work; toilsome work too, as anyone will know who has ever climbed a tree. Indeed, when his day's task is done the stripper may be oft seen returning to his home in hobbling gait, thoroughly used up. But his wage—what is it? Well, that depends on how he may have succeeded at his work, as the payment is pro rata—by the ton of bark. The price per ton, not for the bark but the stripping it, is different for different sized timber. Where the trees are large it is less, and with what is called "coppice wood" more; not that the latter is more difficult to strip, but from its taking longer time to get the same quantity off of it. The scale ranges from £1 up to £1 10s. per ton, but the average rate will be about $5. This includes "railing" the bark; that is resting it on end against rails supported on forked uprights, in order that it may get dry. He is a clever stripper who can make one ton in the week, working twelve hours a day; and the ordinary hands fall far short of that, some not exceeding half a ton. From this the rate of wages may be deduced.

The strippers work in "gangs" of eight or ten—sometimes as many as twenty or thirty—and are employed and paid by the "ganger," he being a man who has undertaken the whole job, dealing directly with the owner of the timber. With each of the smaller gangs there is a woman whose business it is to "rail" the bark, and a boy who carries it to her; the larger gangs employing two railers and two carriers. Nor are the trees stripped here and there irregularly, but taken in "breadths" or sections, of sixty yards wide, running longitudinally through the wood. The sixty yards width has reference to the after convenience of carrying the "cordwood" when the timber is cut down, which is stacked or "corded" along a central line, and so thirty yards from either edge of the section. With this, however, the stripper has nothing to do, his matter being at an end when the bark is all off and railed. There are after processes in preparing it for the tanyard, but these are carried on far away from the wood, in the barkyard of the dealer, and mostly by women.

It is not necessary here to enter upon a description of the felling of the timber, a work about which there is nothing peculiar. It is done by woodmen accustomed to handle an axe, and among them are many of the strippers, now released from their own idiosyncrasy of trade. It gives them a few days' employment; and when that is over they look out for other jobs, some of them taking to mines, if these be near, others to farm work. Still the wood is not deserted; there remaining in it men of at least two other trades—The Hurdle-Maker and The Charker. I do not know whether hurdle-making be an American industry; and therefore what I am about to say of it may be telling a well-known tale. Still it is a calling which needs but brief description, and with that thought I shall venture to give a slight account of it. In England the *raison d'être* of the hurdle is chiefly the keeping of sheep. Throughout most of the winter these animals are removed from the pasture lands and put into fields of growing turnips, or "Swedes," on which they need "penning"; for if left to ramble about at will they would destroy as many, or more, of the roots than they might eat. To avoid this the hurdle is called into requisition, and with these they are inclosed in "pens," taking the field in sections successively; the shifting being done by the shepherd, as the roots in each become exhausted. Of hurdles there are several kinds; "five-barred," high and strong enough to make fences for cattle; "four-barred," for sheep; and the "wattle hurdle," which bears resemblance to rough basket-work. The first and last, however, are exceptional; and the four-barred or "sheep hurdle" is the one I now have to do with. It is six feet in length and four in height or breadth, exclusive of the pointed "spags," to be driven into the ground in setting it up. As its name implies, it has four horizontal bars, which are morticed into three uprights of stouter make, the material employed being usually oak, but sometimes chestnut or willow. A rough affair it is, neither saw nor plane being used in its construction, only the axe, chopper and draw-knife. The bars and uprights are obtained by splitting, or "ripping," in woodman's phraseology; and when cut to length and shape, knocked hastily together; a particular sort of nails, called "hurdle nails," being used to bind them.

The hurdle-maker does his work in the wood, if the weather be fine; but should it rain or snow, or the wind be chilly—for he works in winter as well as summer—he has a shed to shelter him, with a fire convenient. He returns to his home at night, however, though not to his meals, these being eaten and often cooked on the spot where he toils. These wooden hurdles sell for sixteen shillings the dozen, or about 30 cents each. Formerly they were dearer; but the reduced price of iron has brought a powerful competitor into the field; for though the iron hurdle costs three or four times as much, it is a better article and believed to be cheaper in the end. Still the other, from the less outlay at starting, holds a conspicuous place in the farming industry of England, and will doubtless continue to do so. It is by the dozen the hurdle-maker is paid for his work, the scale of payment being five shillings, or fivepence each. And he will work dexterously and hard who puts together five hurdles in the day; or in other words earns 50 cents. Such is the reward for labor in rural England; skilled labor at that!

Of the three callings which form the subject of this letter, that of The Charcoal-Burner is the most exclusive as regards the men who follow it. They are few in numbers, but have rarely any other business, since charcoal-burning gives employment at all seasons of the year; and though apparently a simple thing, it is not so, calling for both knowledge and skill. The material they have to deal with is the "lop and top" of the trees, or cordwood, and their modus operandi as follows: A floor or "pit" is prepared by clearing the rubbish off the ground, and then hollowing out a circular space some six or eight inches in depth, but of no fixed diameter; this being dependent on the quantity of wood to be "charked" in that particular pit lying conveniently near for carriage to it. In the centre of the floor four or five short, stoutish billets are placed with ends touching, so as themselves to inclose a circular space of a foot or eighteen inches diameter, and on these the ends of the charking sticks are rested slantingly and radiating like the spokes of a wheel. On the outer rim of this first layer a second is placed in similar manner; and so on, till the pile is complete, when it shows the form of an obtuse cone, or hemisphere. Around the central axis, however, is a hollow space or chimney, which has been left open for the fire; and this first kindled at its bottom, by dropping down some burning faggots, in due time permeates the whole mass. But before any flames show on the surface the pile is carefully covered over with a stratum of sods, and so kept, not an airhole being left open. Were the wood allowed to blaze up, there would be no charcoal—only ashes. And just to prevent this is the "charker's" business—a thing of the night as well as the day. It needs two men at least to undertake the task, who in turns sit up all night to watch the fires of the different pits—for there will be several on the burn at the same time—going the rounds from one to another, and patching with a fresh sod or shovelful of earth any spot where flames may threaten an outburst. In fine, when the fires burn themselves out the charcoal is a made thing, and only needs separating from the ashes and earthy matter which have got mixed with it from the superimposed sods.

The "charkers" are paid for their work by measure of the quantity of charcoal produced, the standard of measurement being a large oblong basket holding about three bushels. The exact amount of their earnings is not easily fixed, but certainly they do not make fortunes by "charking," any more than they could by bark-stripping or the fabrication of hurdles. These men stay nearly all their time in the woods, never returning home, even at night, for weeks or months together. They dwell in huts erected by themselves—quaint affairs of conical form made of poles set sloping against one another, gathered in at the top, and thatched with a coating of turf, just as are their charking fires. Many of these huts are made large enough to hold half a dozen men; though rarely occupied by more than two or three; when there will be a like number of rude beds in them, with a full paraphernalia of cooking utensils. Some of the bachelor "charkers," who have no ambition to pay house rent, stick to these sylvan abodes throughout the year, whether they be at work or not.

PRINCE LEOPOLD'S NEW HOME.

From Galignani.

The private apartments at Claremont have been recently redecorated and refurnished by Messrs. Gillow, from the designs of Mr. H. Henry, who, while restricting the general style to that of the best Adam period, has carried out an original scheme of color so successfully that no violent transition is experienced in passing from one room to another. The first room in the suite is the Duke of Albany's study, surrounded by tall cases for books and china. The colors of the woodwork, as of the cornice and ceiling, are white and gold, in designs of the severest "Adam" type, the wall-space intervening between the tops of the cases and the cornice being covered with leather paper of a dull golden hue. Against this ground are hung numerous family pictures, the place of honor over the charming fireplace being assigned to the Prince's favorite dog, a handsome fox-terrier. Close to the writing-table, presented by Wiltshire friends living near Boyton Manor, is, resting on an easel, Richmond's portrait of the Princess Louise, Marchioness of Lorne. Near the mantelpiece is the small Phryne, posed like the figure in Gerome's celebrated picture, and numerous bronzes, choice pieces of china, and other objects of art. The Duchess's boudoir is a sumptuous apartment decorated in two shades of peacock blue and gold, the darker of the two shades employed on the wall being repeated in the frame of the mirror, and the reverse of superb screen embroidered in gold and colors on a satin ground. The portrait of the Duke of Albany, copied by West from the original by Von Angeli, rests for the present on a chair; but some fine antique portraits and a picture of Lady Ormonde already adorns the walls, as do Legros's "Death and the Woodcutter," and Sarah Bernhardt's "Palm Sunday." A few pieces of Oriental armor, an ivory inlaid antique cabinet, and busts of the late Princess Alice and of the Princess Louise complete the adornment of this pretty boudoir. Opening beyond double doors is the bath-room, in which are for the present a picture by Coleman and a landscape bought at the sale of Lord Beaconsfield's effects.

Farther on is the Duke of Albany's dressing-room, in the midst whereof floats a Cupid, picked up with other artistic odds and ends in Venice. This dressing-room, with its narrow couch, has peacock blue walls, against which hang numerous engravings, notably Holman Hunt's "Shadow of the Cross" and Miss Elizabeth Thompson's "Roll Call." The next apartment is the bedroom, to which an air of coolness and repose has been given by the skilful employment of pale sage green and pale blue. Excepting only the cornices and wainscoting, which are of white and gold, the whole of the woodwork has a groundwork of pale sage green, on which are painted scrolls and festoons in blue, and bouquets of various flowers colored, as heralds would say, "proper." As an adjunct to this scheme of decoration, which is very much of the Sheraton type, medallions of a novel kind have been introduced. Red stipple engravings, by Bartolozzi, have been converted into medallions, fastened securely to the woodwork and varnished over, the effect produced being both novel and happy. A large wardrobe treated in this manner is peculiarly successful. The bedstead is a genuine four-poster of antique dimensions and exceedingly lofty. In color and fashion it accords with the wardrobe, chests-of-drawers and dressing-table, and is very handsomely painted and adorned with Bartolozzi medallions. The curtains, which like all the new stuffs employed are of English manufacture, are of mingled terra-cotta color and sage green, bordered with gold and white tissue of Persian design, and lined with pale blue, trimmed with Cluny lace. A coverlet of handsome Cluny lace adds lightness and softness to the general effect. A beautiful Venetian mirror hangs over the fireplace, and drawings by O'Connor and other artists in water-colors contribute cheerfulness to this very pretty and tasteful interior. The dressing-room designed for the Duchess has wall-paper in which *rose Dubarry* is the prevailing tone, and furniture of Louis Seize character painted with a cream-colored ground and adorned with flowers. One side of the room is almost entirely occupied by a vast wardrobe painted in this pretty style, and which on being opened is found to have concealed a bath. The furniture is covered with cretonne tapestry with a cream-colored ground to accord with the woodwork. All the private apartments, like those for entertaining company, are on the ground-floor, or rather the floor level with the *perron*, and above the lofty and roomy basement story.

ALAS, SO LONG!

Ah! dear one, we were young so long,
It seemed that youth would never go,
For skies and trees were ever in song,
And water in singing flow,
In the days we never again shall know.
Alas, so long!
Ah! then, was it all spring weather?
Nay; but we were young and together.

Ah! dear one, I've been old so long,
It seems that age is loth to part,
Though days and years have never a song,
And, oh! have they still the art
That warmed the pulses of heart to heart?
Alas, so long!
Ah! then, was it all spring weather?
Nay; but we were young and together.

Ah! dear one, you've been dead so long—
How long until we meet again,
Where hours may never lose their song,
Nor flowers forget the rain,
In glad noonlight that never shall wane?
Alas, so long!
Ah! shall it be then spring weather?
And ah! shall we be young together?

D. G. ROSSETTI.

A BRITISH VIEW OF AMERICAN SOCIETY.

From Blackwood's Magazine.

For some time past we have been acquiring, by various side-lights, a great deal of insight into the constitution of American society. These glances of enlightenment have sometimes been thrown by foreign hands, as in the remarkable illustrations of the upper circles of New-York first introduced to the readers of this magazine in the revelations of Miss Irene Magillicuddy; but have also been supplied in abundance by native expositors. The most remarkable of the latter, however, have rather disclosed America abroad than America at home, revealing the race to us in its cosmopolitan aspect, as it roams about the highways of Europe, and settles itself, here and there, a little colony in the capitals of the Old World. From the disclosures which have been thus made to us, we have learned that the republican rule and democratic equality upon which the great Empire of the West is founded, are more odious to its most highly cultivated citizens than any corrupt court of the elder world ever was. It had been one of the commonplaces of old world opinion, considered prejudice by the advanced and high-minded that the absence of all social standards of rank would prove more likely to produce an exaggerated estimate of it than that lofty indifference which would be the becoming sentiment of a dignified and enlightened republic. But we may venture to say that few, even of the most prejudiced, were prepared for the view of American feeling on this point, given to us by its native exponents, as existing among the wealthy and highly educated crowds who throng European cities, and to whom every assertion of popular right, or breaking down of old despotic tradition, is an offence and injury. The bitterness with which these elegant colonists resent the substitution of constitutional for absolute rule; their angry sense of disappointment at every new assimilation of the historic countries in which they have taken refuge to the government of their own; their regrets and yearnings after Emperor and Pope, seemed at first a whimsical piece of satire, another exhibition of characteristic American humor to our astonished eyes. And it is only after a number of skilled expositors have given time and toil to the task of convincing us that this is a true reading of the real state of affairs, that we have yielded our amused consent to, and learned to recognize the full meaning involved in, this curious development of feeling.

The discovery that equality to an educated American means a settled conviction that he himself belongs of right to the highest circles everywhere, and that the wives of commission-merchants in New-York are shamefully treated if they do not hobnob with duchesses in London—but that, at the same time, it is highly prejudicial to the rest of the world that the distinction between dukes and stock-brokers should be done away, or a single barrier removed—is one of the most instructive, as well as the most entertaining, that the world has made for many a day. The disgust with which the refined republican sees the elder nations adopting even the smallest portion of the creed to which he was born—and which, indeed, gives him his standing-ground, and alone introduces him into the society in which he delights—is one of the most purely comic elements in existing society. There is the highest humor in the commentary it reads at once upon the theory and practice of government and national politics. If the democracy with which we are scared by so many prophets come only to this, the observer might be excused for finding in it more food for laughter than for tears.

THE DECAY OF ENTHUSIASM.

From The London Globe.

Like fire, enthusiasm might be described as "a good servant but a bad master." Enthusiastic persons are apt to be disturbed by their quieter brethren who share Talleyrand's dislike to "trop de zele" in any cause. And yet what a blank would be left in the world if all enthusiasm were banished from it. The calm judging, sober-minded man, who can never be stirred to strong emotion, is doubtless a wise and safe acquaintance, but is apt to become an extremely tedious one. An "impartial" historian is generally very dull reading. When Johnson said that he liked "a good hater," he doubtless intended to convey a protest against the colorless, amiable characters who are capable of neither strong affections nor strong dislikes; who cannot be stirred to anger by sight of wrong doing, nor to admiration by knowledge of deeds of heroism; who pass through life without experiencing half the troubles of their more sensitive neighbors, and generally attain to an extreme old age. Fontenelle was an example of this kind of person; and he himself attributed his unusual length of life (he attained the age of ninety-four) to the fact that "he never laughed and never cried." Most people are familiar with the story of the friend who came to visit him when the savant was about to give directions regarding the dressing of a dish of early asparagus. Fontenelle invited his visitor to share the delicacy, and finding that he preferred the asparagus cooked without oil, directed the cook to prepare half of the bundle to his friend's taste, half to his own. Scarcely, however, had the cook quitted the apartment than the visitor fell down in a fit and expired. This tragic occurrence did not so disturb the easygoing philosopher as to make him forget his dinner. He ran promptly to the door and called to the servant, "My poor friend the abbe is dead. You can dress all the asparagus with oil." Fontenelle was not a solitary example of this equanimity of temper; a nature peculiarly irritating to more excitable persons, who do not scruple to attribute the philosopher's calm to the selfishness of the philosopher's disposition. Enthusiastic people often commit great absurdities, but are certainly more lovable individuals than the intensely reasonable man, whose heart never overrules his head. Most of us would prefer our friends to love us after the partial fashion of the fair Quakeress, who, when asked by a youthful friend if she could "give him her love," demurely replied, "Yea, John, I give my love to all our members, but I am afraid that thee is getting more than thy due share."

Whether for good or evil, enthusiasm would seem to be on the wane in the present day. It is decidedly out of fashion. Centuries ago "repose" of manner was not a characteristic of "the class of Vere de Vere." What we should now term a childish exhibition of emotion was looked upon with respect. Great kings were not ashamed of giving way to public bursts of fury, rarely beheld save in lunatic asylums. Philip de Comines relates, quite as a matter of course, how the Duke of Burgundy was wont to yield to the wildest outbursts of passion if opposed or thwarted; and appears to have thought none the worse of him for these outbreaks. How constantly do we read of death or injury inflicted on their nearest and dearest by men incapable of self-control, and how leniently their age judged these fits of Berserker fury. They were equally outspoken in their repentance. To walk in procession publicly acknowledging their crimes was as little humiliating to a king or noble, as to fall into fits of mad passion. Mail-clad warriors embraced in public; to shed tears readily was looked upon as a mark of sanctity, the "donum lachrymarum" coveted by pious monks. The strangest vows were made, the wildest projects undertaken, by acute and talented men, in an age when enthusiasm was respected and encouraged.

Balzac was the neighbor of Prince Z., and often used to pay him a visit in the morning, clad in the completest *neglige*. One day Balzac met at his neighbor's a niece of the Prince, and felt bound to excuse himself on the nature of his attire. "Monsieur," replied the young lady, "when I read your books, I did not trouble myself about the binding."

MAGAZINE LITERATURE.

LONGFELLOW'S SPIRITUAL LIFE.

O. B. Frothingham in The Atlantic.

During the war he made no public demonstration, nor was quoted either in defence or in reprobation of any public policy; yet his loyalty was never called in question, nor was the course of his sympathy ever misunderstood. Whoever penetrated even a little way beneath the surface found an enthusiasm for liberty as hearty, a faith in justice as firm, a confidence in the final issue as lofty, as any combatant could desire. In a country where there was no national church, no generally accepted form of religious worship or observance, and where, consequently, theological opinions were vehemently debated, he kept his religious thoughts to himself; but he was an honest friend to liberty of inquiry, and associated himself with those who put it sincerely into practice. He was no controversialist, no sectary. Religion, with him, was an affair of the heart rather than of the intellect, and, for his part, he was content to believe reasonably. At one time the Roman Catholics claimed him as being of their communion, finding justification in certain generous words that came from his pen in praise of some cathedral rite or holy custom. But it was merely a touch of sentiment, a spark of that broad poetic feeling which recognized beauty under all forms of ritual. He was a poet, and he was religious: that is the whole secret. A religious reformer he certainly was not, could not be. He could not be a partisan or a polemic. But shall it be reckoned against him that he abstained from dogmatic assertion, and yet held by his convictions; that he was silent yet devout, non committal yet worshipful? Most of the dissent about us is indifference; most of the dumbness is denial. If he did not speculate, at least he did not quarrel, denounce, or sit down in sullen discontent. He was neither optimist nor pessimist, but a submissive disciple. "The gale that blows from God we must endure, toiling but not repining," he says in "Kavanagh."

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It is a common remark that Longfellow was singularly fortunate; that Providence treated him with indulgence, and spared him the struggles and disappointments which attend the lot of most literary men. Hence, add some, faith to him was unnecessary, and all expression of it was sentimental, unreal, literary. But to say nothing of such afflictions as are so tenderly hinted at in "Voices of the Night," the multitude have yet to learn what they have to endure who, along with success, popularity, honor and worldly competence, are endowed with sensitiveness of conscience and tenderness of heart. If it be true that opulence bears more heavily on talent than penury does, it is equally true that responsibility entails more misery than toil does,—misery in the form of regret, uneasiness, dissatisfaction, a sense of weakness, failure, ill-desert, not to speak of multitudinous demands that can be neither met nor dismissed, questions that can be neither answered nor put aside. In spite of ease, Longfellow labored. Success stimulated him to toil; praise made him modest; popularity threw him back on self-knowledge; privilege kept him mindful of duty; honors educated him in charity; and the perpetual presence of a world filled with pain drove him to the bosom of a divine love. Conditions which might have encouraged a self-conscious man to think this the best possible order of things, and a morbid man to regard it as the worst possible, simply rendered him submissive and thoughtful. Perhaps he did not choose to think, being constitutionally ordained to feel; but feeling is as importunate as thought. Whoever, in a world like this, can maintain a still heart is quite as much to be marvelled at as he who can preserve a calm intellect. To outward seeming Mr. Longfellow was a prosperous man. To what extent this impression of him was due to his own equability no one will ever know. That he was endowed with a highly sensitive nature, that in consequence of possessing it he enjoyed and suffered keenly, we do know from his writings, not only in verse, but also in prose; as well original, as selected for translation from the writings of others. After all, temperament counts for a good deal in this matter of optimism or pessimism, and the poetic temperament is exposed to the severest strain. The poet must either be born with a child-like heart, which is proof against the shocks of fate, or he must earn his composure by hard discipline of will. In the first case we admire, in the last we venerate, him. In which category our poet stands is yet to be revealed when his life shall be laid open.

ALPHONSE DAUDET.

Henry James, jr., in The Atlantic.

Daudet is a passionate observer,—an observer not perhaps of the deepest things in life, but of the whole realm of the immediate, the expressive, the actual. This faculty, enriched by the most abundant exercise and united with the feeling of the poet who sees all the finer relations of things and never relinquishes the attempt to charm, is what we look for in the happiest novelist of our day. Ah, the things he sees,—the various, fleeting, lurking, delicate, nameless human things! We have spoken of his remarkable vision of accessories and details; but it is difficult to give an idea of the artistic "go" with which it is exercised. This beautiful vivacity finds its most complete expression in "Les Rois en Exil," a book that could have been produced only in one of these later years of grace. Such a book is intensely modern, and the author is in every way an essentially modern genius. With the light, warm, frank Provencal element in him, he is, in his completeness, a product of the great French city. He has the nervous tension, the intellectual eagerness, the quick and exaggerated sensibility, the complicated, sophisticated judgment, which the friction, the contagion, the emulation, the whole spectacle, at once exciting and depressing, of our civilization at its highest, produces in susceptible natures. There are tears in his laughter, and there is a strain of laughter in his tears; and in both there is a note of music. What could be more modern than his style, from which every shred of classicism has been stripped, and which moves in a glitter of images, of discoveries, of verbal gymnastics, animated always by the same passion for the concrete? With his merits and shortcomings combined, Alphonse Daudet is the charming writer we began by declaring him, because he is so intensely living. He is a thoroughly special genius, and in our own sympathies he touches a very susceptible spot. He is not so serious, not to say so solemn, as Emile Zola, and we suspect that in his heart he finds the doctrine of naturalism a good deal of a bore. He is free from being as deep and wise and just as the great Turgenef. But with his happy vision, his abundant expression, his talent for episodes and figures that detach themselves, his sense of intimate pleasures and pains, his good humor, his gayety, his grace, and that modern quality of intensity that he throws into everything, he is really a great little novelist.

JEWESS.

Joaquin Miller in The Century.

My dark-browed daughter of the sun,
Dear Bedouin of the desert sands,
Sad daughter of the ravished lands,
Of savage Sinai, Babylon,—
O Egypt-eyed, thou art to me
A God-encompassed mystery!

I see sad Hagar in thine eyes.
The obelisks, the pyramids,
Lie hid beneath thy drooping lids.
The tawny Nile of Moses lies
Portrayed in thy strange people's force
And solemn mystery of source.

The black abundance of thy hair
Falls like some twilight sad of June
Above the dying afternoon,
And mourns thy people's mute despair.
The large solemnity of night,
O Israel, is in thy sight!

Then come where stars of freedom spill
Their splendor, Jewess. In this land,
The same broad hollow of God's hand
That held you ever, outholds still.
And whether you be right or nay,
'Tis God's, not Russia's, *here* to say.

THE LOST BOURBON.

George William Curtis in Harper.

It is twenty-nine years ago that, in the editorial sanctum of the old *Putnam* in Park-place, the question was asked, "Have we a Bourbon among us?" The paper which bore the title was sent to Mr. Putnam by the Rev Dr. Hawks, who was at that time a literary and historical authority in the city, as well as an eloquent preacher. He stated that entire confidence could be reposed in the Rev. Mr. Hanson, who wrote the article, and Dr. Hawks also said that he knew Mr. Williams, the alleged lost Bourbon, and considered him to be a simple, truthful, amiable and pious man, of ordinary intellectual power. The good doctor did not undertake to express an opinion upon the claim of Mr. Williams, but he said that he could speak with certainty to the fact that he was not an Indian, and that he was not equal to the invention of complicated evidence to support a fabricated story.

The editors of the new magazine saw at once the advantage to their enterprise of so unique an article, and it was published in the second number. Public attention was soon aroused, and for a long time there was a brisk controversy over the probability of the Williams claim. The strongest argument for it was the appearance of the claimant. Mr. Williams came one morning to Mr. Putnam's office, and the editors descended to see him. They beheld a man who might have sat for the head upon a louis d'or. He was a man of large frame, of swarthy complexion, and of the lift of head and heavily moulded face that marked the Bourbons. There was something singular and distinctive in his appearance, due partly to the dark, un-American hue, and partly, doubtless, to the imagination stimulated by the suggestion that he was the Dauphin. His manner was simple, and of the placid dignity which befitted both his heavy person and his alleged royalty. But it was impossible not to feel that his softness and repose might be also the craft of the Indian, and that it was yet quite too soon to recognize him as the son of St. Louis.

The story has been long forgotten. But a brief series of papers in *The Plattsburg Republican*, written at Green Bay, in Wisconsin, and signed E. S. M., recalls it. The writer, when a child, at home on Lake Champlain, used to hear of the missionary Williams, who had been born in an Indian cabin in wild Caughnawaga. Leading a great multitude of descendants of the Six Nations, he travelled westward to Green Bay, preaching with an eloquence and persuasive power which were wholly new to the Indians. At Green Bay he married the beautiful half-breed who still lives in the house where Williams met her. Her father was a Canadian blacksmith, and her mother a half-caste Menominee. At thirteen years of age she was betrothed to a gallant young trader from Detroit. But the wonderful missionary came, saw and loved. He knew the Indian customs of courtship, and giving the indispensable gifts to the girl's mother, the dusky maiden of fourteen was told one morning that she need not go to school, as she was to be married to Priest Williams in the evening. Tradition, it seems, still fondly describes the fashionable flutter over her baptism and confirmation by Bishop Hobart in old Trinity Church in New-York sixty years ago, recalling that of Pocahontas in London.

But, according to the tale now told from Wisconsin, the simple, amiable, pious, but mentally "slow," claimant of the Bourbon heritage in 1853 was a greater schemer thirty years before, projecting the consolidation of the remnants of the Six Nations into a later Indian empire, of which he was to be prophet and king. But, as the story is told, false to the trust committed to him by the Church, false to his pledges to the Indians, recreant to the national government, the emigration scheme, the basis of his proposed grandeur, failed, and with it Williams fell into obscurity and neglect.

The only singular fact in the narrative of his claim to be the lost Dauphin was the undoubted acquaintance with the Prince de Joinville. But the explanation is simple. The Prince left Albany, with a few friends, to follow the course of his father's western journey when he was an exile and wanderer. Williams, who was then at St. Regis, heard of the plan, and hastened to place himself upon the steamer that was to carry the Prince through the lakes to Green Bay. The Prince asked the captain of the steamer if he could direct him to someone who might recall the journey of his father, and perhaps retain some of its traditions, and the captain naturally introduced Williams. E. S. M. was a guest at the dinner given by the Prince at Green Bay, at which Williams also was an invited guest, but there was no mysterious interview between him and the host. Williams had probably told, with all his old missionary eloquence, at least all that he knew of Louis Philippe's journey, and Louis Philippe's son may very well have bidden him to the Tuileries should he come to Paris, and the Prince did undoubtedly send him tokens of remembrance when he returned to France.

The writer from whom we quote was impressed vividly with the shrewd black eyes and the well-bred "Parisian" ease and dignity of Williams's manner when he called upon her—for we think it is a woman—to arrange the sale of his library to her husband. Not less striking was the library of the frontier missionary to the Indians than the refined courtesy of his address. Some of the books were black-letter on vellum in parchment covers, some, of the oldest English text, some, of the earliest dates of printing, others were venerable St. Chrysostoms, Aquinas, Thomas à Kempis. It was the library that some noble youth of the court, suddenly forsaking the world, and seeking, like the early Jesuit fathers in Candada, to bury himself in the western wilderness, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," might have brought with him—costly editions of his uncle the cardinal, gifts from some royal *decole*—to guide his holy and solitary meditations.

The story passed from remembrance. It was decided that we had not a lost Bourbon among us. Madame Williams said that she never heard of it until she was told by a friend who had read the article in *Putnam's Monthly*, and Williams himself soon relapsed into obscurity. He left Green Bay, and died at Hogansburg, in St. Lawrence County, New-York, about twenty years ago, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. His widow, the lovely Mademoiselle Jourdain of sixty years since, still lives in her solitary home on a high bank over Fox River. No relic of other days remains in the house except the portrait of Williams. The lady last October was still dignified and courteous, wearing an old-fashioned turban of brilliant colors, and a quaint dress, half Christian, half pagan, and she was attended by two half-caste women of her tribe.

CARDINAL NEWMAN'S HOME.

C. Kegan Paul in The Century.

Above the dingy streets of Birmingham, and within short distance of the open, still wild and beautiful country, spread the broad roads of Edgbaston, with their wide gardens and villas, their shrubberies which sift the smoke, and in spring, at least, are bright with lilac and laburnum. The Oratory fronting one of these roads, within sight of thickets and sound of singing birds, is an imposing brick building, with spacious corridors and well-proportioned rooms within. Each father has his own comfortable room, library and bedroom in one, the bed within a screen, the crucifix above, and the prized personal little fittings on the walls. The library is full of valuable books, many of them once the private property of Dr. Newman, now forming the nucleus of a stately collection for the use of the community. The quiet men who share this home come and go about their several businesses—the care of the school, whose buildings join but are separate from the Oratory proper, the work in the church, in hearing confessions, saying masses, and preaching. In the house the long *soutan* and *biretta* are worn; to go abroad they wear the usual dress of the clergy in England. Perhaps it is the dinner hour and the silent figures pass along the galleries to the refectory, a lofty room with many small tables, and a pulpit at one end opposite the tables. At one of these sits the superior alone, clad like the rest save the red lines of his *biretta*, which mark his cardinal's rank. But among his children and in his home, he is still more the superior and the father than a prince of the church. At a table near him may perhaps be a guest, and at others the members of the community, two and two. The meal is served by two of the fathers who take this office in turn, and it is only of late that Dr. Newman has himself ceased to take his part in this brotherly service, owing to his advanced years. During the meal a novice reads from the pulpit a chapter of the Bible, then a short passage from the life of St. Philip Neri, and then from some book, religious or secular, of general interest. The silence is otherwise unbroken save for the words needful in serving the meal. Toward the end, one of the fathers proposes two questions for discussion, or rather for utterance of opinion.

On one day there was a point of Biblical criticism proposed, and one of ecclesiastical etiquette (if the word may be allowed), whether, if a priest called in haste to administer Extreme Unction did so inadvertently with the sacred oil set apart for another purpose, instead of that for Unction, the act were gravely irregular. Each gave his opinion on one or other of these questions, the Cardinal on the first, gravely, and in well-chosen words. Yet it seemed to the observer that, while he, no doubt, recognized that such a point must be decided and might have its importance, there was a certain impatience in the manner in which he passed by the ritual question and fastened on that proposed from Scripture. After this short religious exercise, the company passed into another room for a frugal dessert and glass of wine, since the day chanced to be a feast, and there was much to remind an Oxford man of an Oxford common room, the excellent talk sometimes to be heard there, and the dignified unbending for a while from serious thought.

Dr. Newman once took great delight in the violin, which he played with considerable skill. Even now the fathers hear occasionally the tones awakened by the old man's hand ring down the long gallery near his room, and know that he has not lost the art he loved, while he calms a mind excited from without, or rests from strenuous labor, in the creation of sweet sound. He is still a very early riser, punctual as the sun, still preaches often with what may be best described in words he has applied to St. Philip, "thy deep simplicity."

The Cardinal has of late been engaged on a careful revision, in the light of modern researches, of his translation of St. Athanasius, with notes of some treatises of St. Anathasius against the Arians. He regards this as the end of his life's work—a life which is now appreciated and honored not only by his spiritual sons, but by all fair-minded men o English speech.

THE ENGLISH SCHOOL OF ART.

From Blackwood.

The science of composition, the mental processes by which high generic types are evolved from the individual model, and the real by inductive reasoning becomes stamped with the ideal—these, some of the conditions to the birth of high art, still here remain in a state of comparative infancy. And so little are the general public alive to the exigencies, that achievements all but childish are greeted with astonishment and gratitude. We remember an occasion when our attention was triumphantly directed to a certain foot and ankle: the foot was eminently artistic, but unfortunately it was nothing else than a servile copy of an attitude which Perugino and Raphael, by sundry repetitions, had made trite three hundred years ago. As for draperies, they are borrowed by our modern medievalists wholesale and without discrimination; but the plagiarism often falls into a parody—the garments are cast in folds defying the physical laws of motion and gravitation. Surely a revival, to be worth anything, should restore to us lost excellences; but instead we find, that wanting the knowledge to distinguish between good and bad, the corrupt fruits of spurious schools, such as the debased Byzantine and the late Roman, are cooked up and served afresh. To make to live again what ought to be dead and buried, or at most remembered as a warning, is to confer the reverse of good service on our national art. All things considered, it would seem difficult to rebut the accusation that the English school is the most unlearned and uncritical in Europe.

The confusion which has fallen upon our artists as to historic styles follows them in their dealings with nature. That we have entered on a period of naturalism is cause for thankfulness, provided only that it be of the right sort. But of late years the study given to nature is so far from intelligent as to be little short of silly. A few years ago a characteristic story—*bene trovato*—was told at the expense of our "greatest art-critic," who had been consulted by an aspiring lady as to what she should do in the way of nature-study. A few days after, a cart came to her door laden with a bulky stone of the sort usually chosen for paving and pitching the streets! The lady took the kindly hint as the critic intended. She made an elaborate study of the stone-mason's model. Fortunately for art, these novel roads to fame generally end in oblivion. The time-honored notion used to be, that the painter should with judgment select what was best worth painting—something of beauty, some object of significance; and if a stone, then of the import of creation's corner stone. From Claude and Poussin down to Turner, scenes were chosen wherein nature had written poems—wide search was made in lovely lands for beauteous hills and valleys, lakes, woods and streams; and so the painted canvas glowed in poetic thought. Such pictures did more than please the eye; they were food for the mind; they were better than curious subjects for the microscope; their vision was telescopic, carrying fancy into space, and making imagination the playmate of the elements. Compared with such landscape art, the modern school of so-called "Naturalism" is little else than drivelling.

On the continent of Europe there obtains currency a certain ideal philosophy of nature which has yet barely reached our shores. The position is briefly this: outward nature has an inner life motive and meaning—something more than the hard cuticle that meets the senses of sight and touch; hence such terms as "the soul of Nature." And without justifying the boldness of the metaphor, or accepting it in any literal sense, this soul in nature may be affirmed to be in entire response with the soul of man. And the doctrine, so far from being novel or strange, underlies and permeates all poetry save that which, like our imitative landscape, is literally naturalistic. The vulgar, uneducated intellect is entranced by gross imitation in art; and as such minds are in the majority, artists yield to the temptation of painting down to the public. But connoisseurs of higher range and culture value a picture for its conception and idea; manipulation is but means to an end; the indwelling thought it is that awakens imagination and kindles emotion. Accordingly, across the Channel are to be greeted with gladness certain French artists called "Impressionists"—men who, not satisfied with cold, hard transcripts, literal as photographs, endow form and color with emotion and passion. Germany also—as might be anticipated from her metaphysical tendings—has given pictorial expression to like transcendental speculations. "Nature is to be comprehended through thought and imagination": nature has life, feeling, dramatic situation and action—especially in fierce mountain-lands, in stormy skies and seas—and thus she becomes a sharer in the great drama of humanity. German artists have put these poetic and philosophic theories into practice. The sense of the supernatural has seldom been wholly wanting to the truly great artist. Here at home the fire of inspiration has died out; but we hope the worst is over. Prosaic landscape has had a long day, and signs are not wanting of a coming dawn when the poetry of nature shall be revealed through the reason and the imagination.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES ON EMERSON.

From his Address before The Massachusetts Historical Society.

Emerson's was an Asiatic mind, drawing its sustenance partly from the hard soil of our New-England; partly, too, from the air that has known Himalaya and the Ganges. So impressed with this character of his mind was Mr. Burlingame, as I saw him after his return from his mission, that he said to me, in a freshet of hyperbole which was the overflow of a channel with a thread of truth running in it: "There are twenty thousand Ralph Waldo Emersons in China."

What could we do with this unexpected, unprovided for, unclassified, half-unwelcome new-comer, who had been for a while potted, as it were, in our Unitarian cold greenhouse, but had taken to growing so fast that he was lifting off its glass roof and letting in the hailstorms? Here was a protest that outflanked the extreme left of liberalism, yet so calm and serene that its radicalism had the accents of the gospel of peace. Here was an iconoclast without a hammer, who took down our idols from their pedestals so tenderly that it seemed like an act of worship.

The scribes and Pharisees made light of his oracular sayings. The lawyers could not find the witnesses to subpœna and the documents to refer to when his case came before them, and turned him over to their wives and daughters. The ministers denounced his heresies, and handled his writings as if they were packages of dynamite, and the grandmothers were as much afraid of his new teachings as old Mrs. Piozzi was of geology. We had had revolutionary orators, reformers, martyrs; it was but a few years since Abner Kneeland had been sent to jail for expressing an opinion about the great First Cause; but we had had nothing like this man, with his seraphic voice and countenance, his choice vocabulary, his refined utterance, his gentle courage, which, with a different manner, might have been called audacity, his temperate statement of opinions which threatened to shake the existing order of thought like an earthquake.

His peculiarities of style and of thinking became fertile parents of mannerisms, which were fair game for ridicule as they appeared in his imitators. For one who talks like Emerson or like Carlyle soon finds himself surrounded by a crowd of walking phonographs, who mechanically reproduce his mental and vocal accents. Emerson was before long talking in the midst of a babbling Simonetta of echoes, and not unnaturally was now and then himself a mark for the small shot of criticism. He had soon reached that height in the "cold thin atmosphere" of thought where

"Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark his distant flight to do him wrong."

He dealt with life, and life with him was not merely this particular air-breathing phase of being, but the spiritual existence which included it like a parenthesis between the two infinities. He wanted his daily draughts of oxygen like his neighbors, and was as thoroughly human as the plain people he mentions who had successively owned or thought they owned the house lot on which he planted his hearthstone. But he was at home no less in the interstellar spaces outside of all the atmospheres. The semi-materialistic idealism of Milton was a gross and clumsy medium compared to the imponderable ether of "The Oversoul" and the unimaginable vacuum of "Brahma." He followed in the shining and daring track of the *Graius homo* of Lucretius—

"Vida vis animi pervicit, et extra
Processit longe flammantia mœnia mundi."

It always seemed to me as if he looked upon this earth very much as a visitor from another planet would look on it. He was interested, and to some extent curious about it, but it was not the first spheroid he had been acquainted with, by any means. I have amused myself with comparing his descriptions of natural objects with those of the Angel Raphael in the seventh book of Paradise Lost. Emerson talks of his titmouse as Raphael talks of his emmet. Angels and poets never deal with nature after the manner of those whom we call naturalists.

To judge him as a thinker, Emerson should have been heard as a lecturer, for his manner was an illustration of his way of thinking. He would lose his place just as his mind would drop its thought and pick up another, twentieth cousin or no relation at all to it. This went so far at times that one could hardly tell whether he was putting together a mosaic of colored fragments or only turning a kaleidoscope where the pieces tumbled about as they best might. It was as if he had been looking in at a cosmic peep-show and turning from it at brief intervals to tell us what he saw. But what fragments those colored sentences were, and what pictures they often placed before us, as if we too saw them! Never has this city known such audiences as he gathered; never was such an Olympian entertainment as that which he gave them.

It is very hard to speak of Mr. Emerson's poetry; not to do it injustice, still more to do it justice. It seems to me like the robe of a monarch, patched by a New-England housewife. The royal tint and stuff are unmistakable, but here and there the gray worsted from the darning needle crosses and ekes out the Tyrian purple. Few poets who have written so little in verse have dropped so many of those "jewels five words long" which fall from their setting only to be more choicely treasured. *E pluribus unum* is hardly more familiar to our ears than "He builded better than he knew," and Keats's "thing of beauty" is little better known than Emerson's "beauty is its own excuse for being." One may not like to read Emerson's poetry because it is sometimes careless, almost as if carefully so, though never undignified, even when slipshod; spotted with quaint archaisms and strange expressions that sound like the affectation of negligence, or with plain, homely phrases, such as the self-made scholar is always afraid of. But if one likes Emerson's poetry he will be sure to love it; if he loves it, its phrases will cling to him as hardly any others do. It may not be for the multitude, but it finds its place like pollen dust and penetrates to the consciousness it is to fertilize and bring to flower and fruit.

I have known something of Emerson as a talker, not nearly so much as many others who can speak and write of him. It is unsafe to tell how a great thinker talks, for perhaps, like a city dealer with a village customer, he has not shown his best goods to the innocent reporter of his sayings. However that may be in this case, let me contrast in a single glance the momentary effect in conversation of the two neighbors, Hawthorne and Emerson. Speech seemed like a kind of travail to Hawthorne. One must harpoon him like a cetacean with questions to make him talk at all. Then the words came from him at last, with bashful manifestations, like those of a young girl, almost—words that gasped themselves forth, seeming to leave a great deal more behind them than they told, and died out, discontented with themselves, like the monologue of thunder in the sky, which always goes off mumbling and grumbling as if it had not said half it wanted to, and meant to, and ought to say.

Emerson was sparing of words, but used them with great precision and nicety. If he had been followed about by a shorthand-writing Boswell, every sentence he ever uttered might have been preserved. To hear him talk was like watching one crossing a brook on stepping-stones. His noun had to wait for its verb or its adjective until he was ready; then his speech would come down upon the word he wanted; and not Worcester nor Webster could better it from all the wealth of their huge vocabularies.

One glimpse of him as a listener may be worth recalling. He was always courteous and bland to a remarkable degree; his smile was the well-remembered line of Terence written out in living features. But when anything said specially interested him he would lean toward the speaker with a look never to be forgotten, his head stretched forward, his shoulders raised like the wings of an eagle, and his eye watching the flight of the thought which had attracted his attention as if it were his prey to be seized in midair and carried up to his eyry.